



## Creating Opportunity in Higher Education

WASHINGTON

STATE

HIGHER

EDUCATION

COORDINATING

BOARD

### State Student Financial Aid Programs

#### Background

Washington State helps keep college affordable by funding colleges and universities and offering direct aid to individual students. By paying more than 60 percent of the cost of public higher education, the state can reduce the amount of tuition charged to students.<sup>1</sup>

Direct financial aid to individual students falls into one of three categories:

- Assistance to needy students (State Need Grant, Work Study, Educational Opportunity Grant);
- Rewarding merit (Washington Promise Scholarship, Washington Scholars); and
- Targeted assistance (Health Professional Loan Repayment and Scholarship).

Nearly one-third of all Washington students – or about 100,000 people – receive some form of direct aid. In 1999-2000, Washington students received about \$970 million from all sources (federal, state, other). The Higher Education Coordinating Board administers the following state financial aid programs for students attending public and independent colleges and universities.

#### State Need Grant

State Need Grants help low-income students go to college. In 1999-2000,

<sup>1</sup> State support covers about 60 to 75 percent of the total cost of undergraduate instruction and about 60 to 70 percent of the total cost of graduate instruction at public colleges and universities.

about 53,500 Washington undergraduate students will use \$79 million in State Need Grants to pursue degrees, hone skills or retrain for new careers. For students still dependent on their parents, average family income is generally less than \$16,000 per year. For self-supporting students, average income is less than \$7,000. The average State Need Grant is about \$1,500 per academic year.

#### State Work Study

Through part-time employment, low- and middle-income students earn money for college while gaining experience in areas related to their degrees or career interests. In 1999-2000, about 9,500 students will earn nearly \$20 million, with \$15.4 million from the state and the rest from the employers' share of wages. For dependent students, the average family income is generally less than \$32,000 per year. For self-supporting students, the average income is about \$7,000.

#### Educational Opportunity Grant

This program provides \$2,500 grants to encourage financially needy, "placebound" students to complete a four-year degree. To be considered placebound, students need to live in one of 13 counties and have finished only the first two years of a four-year degree due to family or employment commitments, health concerns, financial need, or other similar factors. Students can use the grants at eligible public and independent colleges and universities with unused enrollment capacity. In 1999-2000, an estimated 1,000 students will receive Educational Opportunity Grants.

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### **Washington Promise Scholarship**

Students who graduate from a state public or private high school at the top of their class and come from low- or middle-income families are eligible for grants equal to about two years of community college tuition. Family income cannot exceed 135 percent of the state's median family income – about \$77,600 for a family of four. In 1999-2000, about 2,250 students who graduated in the top 10 percent of their class were eligible for \$1,225 scholarships. In 2000-2001, eligible students will be those who either rank in the top 15 percent of their class or score 1,200 or more on their SAT test on their first try.

### **Health Professional Loan Repayment and Scholarship**

This program was created to address the critical shortages of qualified health care professionals statewide. Health care professionals agree to provide primary health care service for three to five years in medically underserved areas or in areas that have experienced a shortage of health professionals. In exchange, participants receive either conditional scholarships or help in repaying their school loans. Recipients do not have to be state residents to apply. In 1999, more than 170 health professionals worked in underserved areas in Washington State as a result of the program.

### **Washington Scholars**

This program honors the accomplishments of three high school students from each of the 49 state legislative districts. High school principals nominate the top one percent of the graduating senior class on the basis of academic achievement, leadership, and community service. Scholars receive state grants equal to about four years of public undergraduate resident tuition. The awards can be used at any Washington public or independent college or university.

### **Washington Award for Vocational Excellence**

Three vocational students from each of the 49 state legislative districts are recognized for outstanding achievement in vocational-technical education. High schools, skills centers, and community and technical colleges nominate students, who receive state grants equal to about two years of undergraduate resident tuition. Grants can be used at eligible public, private vocational, and independent schools in Washington.

### **WICHE Student Exchange**

Washington residents can enroll in eligible programs in 14 states through the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) student exchange. The *Professional Student Exchange* provides state support to optometry and osteopathy students. Graduate students can enroll in masters and doctoral out-of-state programs and pay reduced tuition rates through the *Regional Graduate Exchange*. Undergraduate students can attend out-of-state programs and pay 150 percent of resident tuition, rather than out-of-state tuition, through the *Western Undergraduate Exchange*. Nearly 200 students participated in WICHE programs in 1999-2000.

### **American Indian Endowed Scholarship**

This program helps financially needy students with close cultural ties to a Native American community pursue undergraduate and graduate studies at public and independent schools in Washington. Scholarship money comes from interest generated through an endowment, funded by private contributors and the State. About 15 scholarships between \$1,000 and \$1,500 are awarded annually.

### **Future Teachers**

Public school classified employees who have been accepted or are enrolled in an accredited teacher certification program are eligible for conditional scholarships. In return for school loans of up to \$4,000 per year, employees agree to teach in Washington K-12 public schools. For every two years of teaching service, the state will forgive one year of the loan. For every one year of service in a geographic or subject area with a shortage of teachers, the state will forgive one year of the loan.

### **Community Scholarship Organization Matching Grants**

Community scholarship organizations that raise \$2,000 for student scholarships may apply for state matching grants of \$2,000. Organizations must be tax exempt and have 501(c)(3) federal tax code status. In 1999-2000, 125 state matching grants were available.